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THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

COOKE-DANIELS LECTURES

By

HARTLEY B. ALEXANDER, Ph.D.

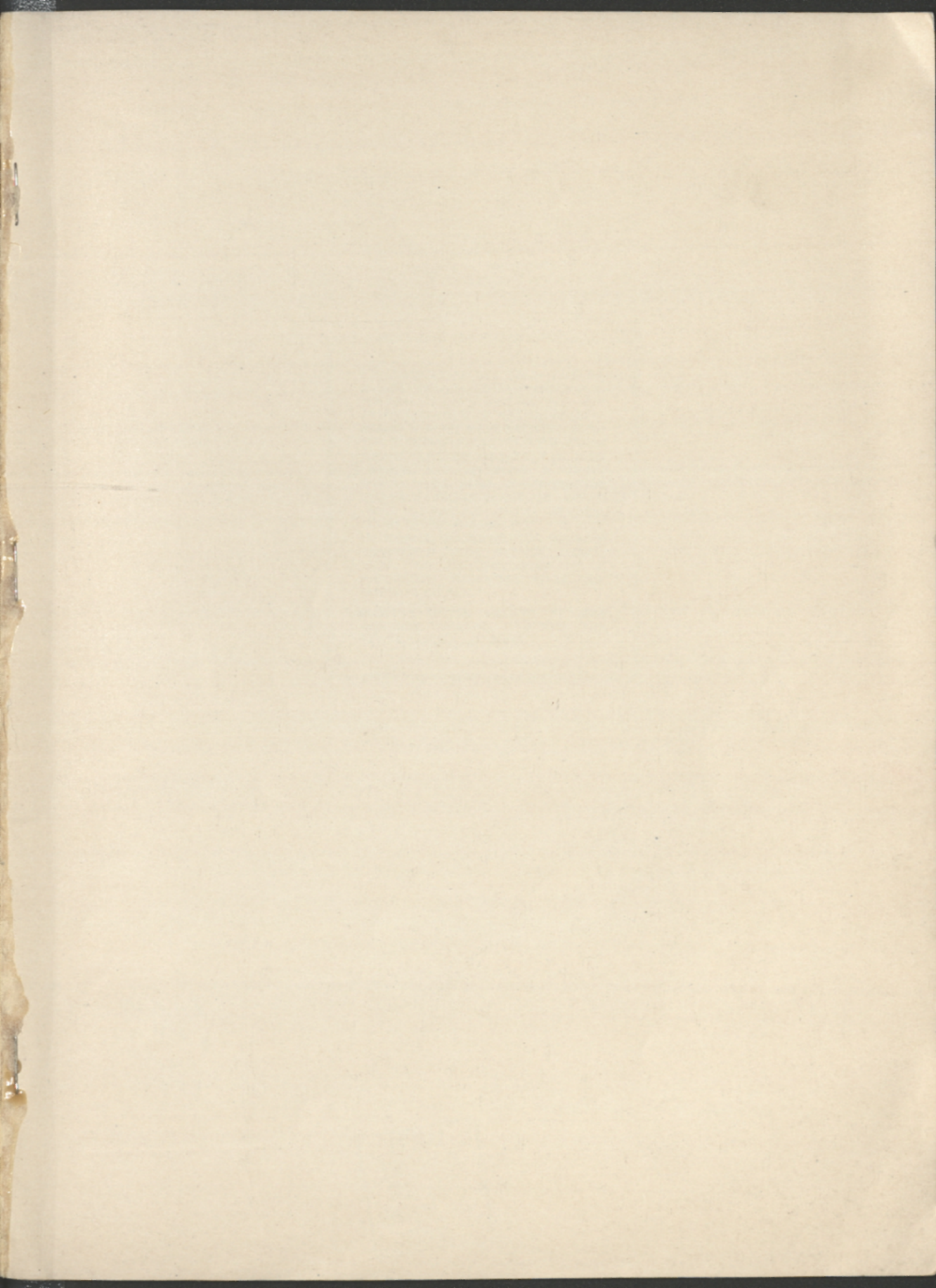
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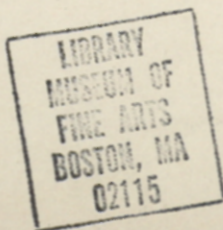


"IN MEMORY OF MY GOOD FRIENDS,  
MAJOR WILLIAM COOKE-DANIELS AND  
HIS WIFE, CICELY COOKE-DANIELS, AND  
IN APPRECIATION OF THE MANY KIND-  
NESSES WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED FROM  
THE CITIZENS OF DENVER WITH WHOM  
I HAVE COME IN CONTACT, I DO NOW  
CREATE AND ESTABLISH A TRUST  
WHICH SHALL HAVE AS ITS PURPOSE  
THE PROVIDING OF FUNDS FOR ONE OR  
MORE COURSES OF PUBLIC LECTURES  
TO BE GIVEN ANNUALLY IN THE CITY  
OF DENVER, PREFERABLY ON SUBJECTS  
CONNECTED WITH ART OR LITERA-  
TURE. THE LECTURER SHALL BE OF  
RECOGNIZED PRE-EMINENCE IN THE  
SUBJECTS CHOSEN."

FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY MISS  
FLORENCE MARTIN, FOUNDING THE  
COOKE-DANIELS LECTURES.

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*Illustrating "Monumental Architecture," Page thirty-one*



## COOKE-DANIELS LECTURES

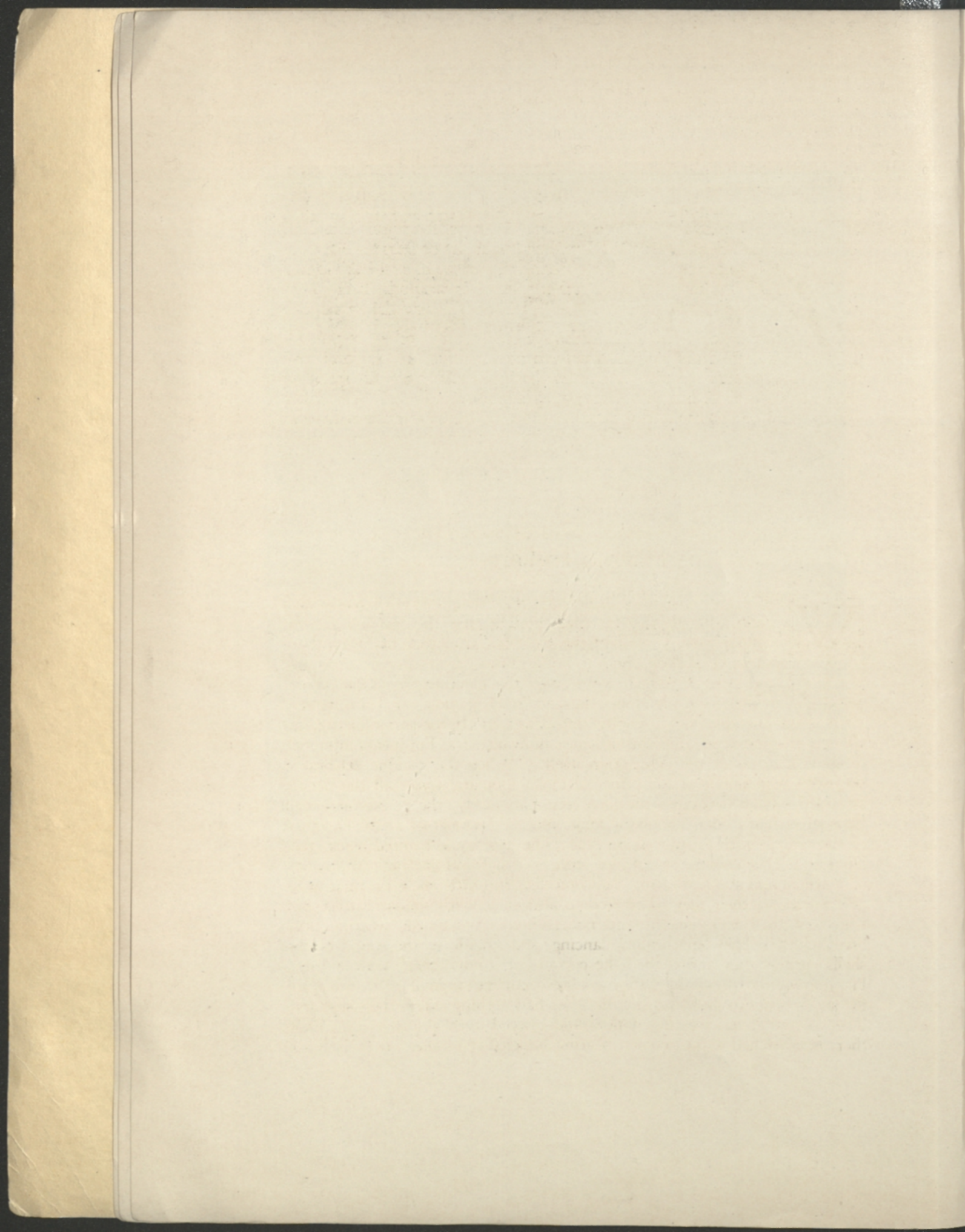
*First Series of Nineteen Twenty-seven*

By

HARTLEY B. ALEXANDER, Ph.D.

1. THE RITUAL DANCES OF THE PUEBLO INDIANS
2. THE PICTORIAL AND PICTOGRAPHIC ART OF  
THE INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA
3. MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE









PAINTING OF THE EAGLE DANCE, BY FRED KABOTIE, PUEBLO

## The Ritual Dances of the Pueblo Indians

**W**HEN the Spaniards came into the Island of Hispaniola, says Peter Martyr, they at first thought that the Indians had no religion save worship of the stars, but after they had been there a few years they began to notice among them divers ceremonies and rites, to which were given the name *areito*. Gómara describes such an *areito*, as seen in Hispaniola, or Haiti, a few years after the discovery, wholly untouched by European influence, although one must certainly make some allowance for European inference in some features of the description itself. "When the cacique celebrated the festival in honor of his principal idol," Gómara says, "all the people attended. They decorated the idol very elaborately; the priests arranged themselves like a choir about the king, and the cacique sat at the entrance of the temple with a drum at his side. The men came painted black, red, blue, and other colours or covered with branches and garlands of flowers, or feathers and shells, wearing shell bracelets and little shells on their arms and rattles on their feet. The women also came with similar rattles, but naked, if they were maids, and not painted; if married, wearing only breechcloths. They approached dancing, and singing to the sound of the shells, and as they approached the cacique he saluted them with a drum. Having entered the temple, they vomited, putting a small stick into their throat, in order to show the idol that they had nothing evil in their stomach. They seated themselves like tailors and prayed with a low voice. Then there approached many women bearing baskets and cakes on their heads



and many roses, flowers, and fragrant herbs. They formed a circle as they prayed and began to chant something like an old ballad in praise of the god. All rose to respond at the close of the ballad; they changed their tone and sang another song in praise of the cacique, after which they offered the bread to the idol, kneeling. The priests took the gift, blessed, and divided it; and so the feast ended, but the recipients of the bread preserved it all the year and held the house unfortunate and liable to many dangers which was without it."

Anyone who has attended a Pueblo fiesta will at once recognize that here in our own Southwest, in our own day, we are annually witnessing just such *areitos* as the Spaniards encountered in the Antilles in the first years after Columbus. He will perceive that in certain respects the ceremony has been modified by trans-Atlantic influences. The "idol" of the Haitian cacique has been replaced in the booth by a Spanish saint, and mass is said before the dancers appear in the plaza. But the main lines of the ceremony are the same; and it is impossible to doubt that the fundamental idea is identical, both in ceremonial form and in social implication.

What that idea is is already implied in Gómara's description. The *areito* is, in the first place, a concourse of the tribe: all ages and both sexes, married and unmarried, chieftain and tribesmen, each in his capacity of social constituent participates in the ritual. The dance is of and for and by the people, as we should say; and its meaning is somehow the life of the people and the perpetuity of the tribe. Again, the dance is in some deep-seated sense in honor of the Earth-Mother, or perhaps of that union of Mother Earth and Father Sky, whence life is born. As we are inclined to phrase it, the rite is agricultural, and we are also inclined to infer that there is a kinship, very remote in years but very near in kind, between the Antillean *areito* and the Pueblo fiesta, in that both are sprung from some parent ritual which accompanied, we may assume, the spread of agriculture in the New World many centuries anterior to the day of Columbus. But the connection with agriculture, with maize or with yucca, is after all itself only symbolic. The real heart of the ceremony is that the dance is a prayer for bread, the Bread of Life, as witnessed both by the votive offering and the sacramental banquet; and it is perfectly evident that this bread was in itself, after it had been blessed and danced, something more than a symbol. It was a sign of life in some supreme and eucharistic sense, representing not only nourishment but also seed; and it is devoted to that Great Mother whose incarnation is the Corn, but whose being is that of the moving and transforming life of all nature. Alma Mater, Genetrix, Frugifera, a Latin might have called her.

Before we can make even a first step toward the comprehension of folk rituals such as the Pueblo dances, this fact must be grasped: that the whole life of the people bodies itself forth in images of life,—images



that are supplications and at the same time festal representations, as if the dancers were saying to the Great Mother and Father, "Behold! this is our life! the Infant, the Youth, the Aged, the Nation as one whole! Here we dance before you! Here we display the joy of that being which you have made living within us! Let it continue! Let us prosper! Let us live!" The dance is the people opening its heart to its parent world, publicly confessing its nature, pleading where it feels want, thanksgiving where it feels rich in delight, making itself beautiful with color and song that the Parent Being may find it acceptable in form and in heart.

This is the first fact: the dance is incarnate Life, at some thrilling or moving moment of our being, building into its fantasies the united resources of the whole tribe of man, every age and every condition, to create the tribal conception of the *Vita*, the Form of Life, which is their humanity. For this *Vita*, this Form of Life, Nature herself defines the tokens in an arc of transformations that mark our coming into and passing out of mortal being; and so, in the Indian's cyclic rituals, there are festal celebrations imaging the full round. There is the *areito* that celebrates mating and procreation; that which celebrates birth and the reception of the new life into the tribal being; those which mark budding youth and blooming maturity; and the rites for the departed, when the Great Mother summons the living tribesman to join the pale household of the Spirits of the Ancestors. Nor are these latter beyond the sphere of communion. They dwell on the other side of the phantasmal wall of Earth's Seasons, summering when we winter, wintering when we enjoy our summer; participating in our life in thought and in action, for the rains are theirs to give; inspiring, even if invisibly, our weaker days; addressing us with voices, which are the songs we catch from nowhere, to become magically our "medicine"; and finally, striking into us the vital and fecund strength which through them we derive from the source of all living, the Father-the-Mother, the Elder One, who is the Male-Female parent of all. The dead are not entombed in the body of Earth, as the Indian sees them: they go thither to become core of its core, heart of its heart; to make music and medicine within Earth's cavernous lodges; to rise in mist, to float upon the clouds, causing the good rains to descend, and the fields to bear fruit; to nourish and to cherish; and often, if they be souls of little children, they may permit that the mother who mourns them may bear them once more into the light of our Sun. So it is, that in the great fiestas, the Spirits move, invisible among the visible; while in our Winter, which is their summer, the whole ritual series is under the tutelage of the masks of the tribal Ancients.

The *areitos*, then, express Human Life, in all its moments and in all its emotions, so far as the tribesmen understand it; and the cycle of the dances define their philosophy of life. Birth and death, feasting and war, merriment and grief, love and hate,—every occasion and every passion



finds its appropriate celebration,—and even the reach of humanity beyond this realm, on into the land of souls, that, too, is celebrated. This, then, is my first fact. Beyond it, there is another, a second fact about the dance symbolism, that must be understood if we are to grasp truly all that the Pueblo fiesta would say to us.

I think that this second fact is peculiarly ready of comprehension to anyone who is on the ground—who walks the soil of the Southwest—long enough to be caught by the splendid and masterful spirit of the country itself. For there are few parts of the habitable Earth that are so impervious to impression from the hand of man. The Pueblo country is a land of wide vistas, mile-broad views in many directions, revealing everywhere a certain merciless mastery of Nature over Man. What the country now is to the external view, such it was to the Spaniards in 1540; such it was to the primitive basket-makers centuries before their successors built settled villages; such also to the first wild nomads who hunted over its plateaux and down into its canyons. In most of the United States we Americans have such a satisfied sense of human competency that it is seldom even remotely in our minds that we dwell by sufferance upon our inhabited lands, that any year the drop of a few degrees in the mean annual temperature could drive us by the tens of thousands into starvation, and that we should be helpless in the face of a Great Cold. But in the Southwest it is not difficult to realize man's actual futility, his very simple and helpless dependence upon the Seasons, his ever-anxious concern that the gifts of a meagre soil be not denied him. Every landscape proclaims it: piñon, sagebrush, cactus, bunchgrass, mile upon mile struggling for their weak vegetal hold upon life; and while it is true that many a fertile valley follows the courses of the mountain-fed streams, these are mainly lost in the clefts of deep-cut canyons, and in any case they are so dwarfed by the general expanse of the starveling plateau that their presence seems always as by grace. There is no necessity of life in the region; life holds there only by permission. And the impression of this fact is vastly enhanced by the sheer rise of Earth's titanic superstructures, the stratified ranges of the mountains, the harsh volcanic upthrusts, the broken mesas, like ruins of gigantic edifices reared by some huge First People, themselves overthrown by massive destinies. This is the visible and irresistible proclamation of the whole land, and the villages of men outwardly appear like a human acknowledgment of man's subordination: they cling so inconspicuously to cliffwall or mesa-top, or rest so heavily, almost as if cowering, upon the bit of Earth's bosom that is friendly to man's being. There is no arrogance in this village architecture of the Southwest. It is beautiful in its relation to its own soil—a relationship of trust—in the same sense that a bird's nest is beautiful in its relation to the sheltering tree; and it is perilous, as a bird's nest is perilous, under the sway of the elements.



It is an extraordinary thing that agriculture should have seated itself in this relatively inhospitable land, many centuries ago, when apparently far more fertile areas were open to homesteading. To the best of our judgment, American agriculture originated in the uplands, in the plateau region of Mexico; and there can be little question but that the Pueblo civilization derives in this particular directly from the south; nor is there much doubt but that it represents the oldest agriculture north of the Mexican.

What we must picture, for some remote past, are scattered groups of nomadic hunters and root-grubbers, hearing marvelous tales of a great Medicine People, for toward the land where the Sun makes his Winter Camp, to whom the gods have given the secret of the Food of Life, the secret of a Seed, sprung from the divine body itself, which nourishes the People and makes the Tribe to wax strong and fruitful. And we may imagine a delegation made up of men who had fasted and prayed and danced, laden with gifts of the chase or perhaps gems of turquoise and jade, and certainly accompanied by maidens in the first blush of life, for it will have been sung that to these alone the sacred Corn could be entrusted,—such a delegation, in some remote age, which we shall picture as making its way southward to ~~Those-to-Whom-the-Corn-has-been-given~~, and there with feasting and gift-giving and stately *areitos* in which the Dance of Corn is duly taught, receiving the Seed, ears of white corn and blue corn, of yellow corn and red, given into the hands of the Maidens and brought with the dances home to their own people. And we can imagine also the eager planting—will the seed produce in another land? Will the gods prove kindly? The rejoicing when the first green sprouts appear; the cultivating, with maidens' magic to foster the growth; and finally when the green-corn ears are formed and the fruit ready for the first feast, the delirium of festal joy, in which all the people shall join in the dances which have been taught, and with thanksgiving open the doors of a harvest-rich future. Is it of wonder that during the long centuries that have followed, the great annual feast is still the crown of the year for all the Corn-growers? that the old dances and songs are still piously preserved, and the miracle of the Corn Maidens still repeated in myth and in art?

Let us for a moment dwell upon the rich and intricate symbolism of the Corn Dance, as it is celebrated in our own day, repeating in memorial the Great Transformation, which redeemed from want and misery the remote parents of the Pueblo tribes. In the typical Pueblo Fiesta, the morning ceremony is marked by the celebration of mass in the Mission Church, by marriages according to the Christian rite, and by a procession in honor of the Saint whom the Spaniards brought to be the tutelary of the town,—although, who indeed can know if the Indian may not still see behind the painted and beribboned doll just such a Medicine Image as Gómara beheld in the booths erected in Haiti ere Spanish priest had



built his first chapel on New World soil? Certainly, once the image is set, within just such a booth as Gómara describes, the ancient festival begins. There is the same procession, the gifts of bread and meats, and afterwards the same *areito*, all of the New World, nothing of the Old.

The image of the Saint is hardly deposited within the shrine before the sound of drums, the chatter of rattles, and excited cries announce the beginnings of the ancient ritual. From the half-underground ceremonial lodges—*estufas*, *kivas*,—issue the Spirit Beings—*Koshare*, *Tsuntash*, *Ne'wekwe*, are names for them in Keres and Tano and *Zuñi*—who represent the unbodied Ancients, conceived as daemons of fertility. Their bodies are painted in ghostly colors; their only garb is rags and dead husks; but in their hands they carry green boughs, and as they dance from street to street and house to house they strike maid and child with the leafage, as these with half-frightened laughter strive to elude them. Actually, this is a ceremony of purification and fertilization, a promise of welfare to the village; and it is inevitably suggestive of the action of the Fauns of the Roman *Lupercalia*, who danced through the streets of ancient Rome striking wife and maid with the thong that was to render them fertile. Later in the day these same Spirit Dancers will be seen weaving in and out of the phalanx of the dancers, peering, gesticulating, seeming to see past and future, and strangely ignored by their fellow performers, who seem not to see them, no matter how close they tread. For are they not the Spirits of the Fathers, come to join the festival, invisible to mortal eyes?

When the sun is high there is motion from the *estufas*. Nowadays, in most of the *Pueblos*, each village is ceremonially divided into a Summer People and a Winter People, and these dance turn by turn in the plaza, alternating as do the seasons that make up the year. The colors of the Summer People are the sky colors, blue and yellow; those of the Winter People are the earth colors, red and green. But each dancer, male and female, in his own person symbolizes the union of Heaven and Earth. At the crown of the head of the male dancer is a crest of varicolored parrot's plumes, symbol of the glowing zenith; on his feet are moccasins ornamented with the black and white pelt of the earth-burrowing skunk. About his waist are streamers and embroideries symbolic of clouds and rain; rattles of antelopes' hooves imitate the sound of the rain upon the corn; his hair, like that of the women, falls loose, as a descending shower. Boughs of evergreen pine adorn his body, and in one hand he waves a sprig of green, while in the other his gourd rattle imitates the swish of the summer shower upon the green fields. Paint adds to the symbolism, which is in every detail a petition for the descending rain and the responding vegetation upon which man's life depends.

The female dress has an analogous meaning. The girls and women dance with bare feet, hardly lifting the soles above the soil which is the Earth Mother element. The most striking detail of their costume is the



head-dress, the tablita or panel above the crown, carved at its crest with symbolic cloud-terraces, with sky-arches, with sun and moon symbols, and surmounted by wisps of white featherdown symbolic of the fleeces of heaven. Turquoise of the summer skies, yellow of fruitful pollen, green of vegetation, red of the life-blood, all these colors mingle in the costumes, while the singers in dramatic chorus enact the drama of the growing maize, in gesture symbolizing the planting, the sprouting, the early growth, the plentiful harvest; and the dancers, male and female in pairs, gray-haired elders on down to infants barely able to keep the line, move as one being at the insistent command of the booming drum. To the Pueblo mind this Corn Dance is an essential act of agriculture, as essential as sowing or cultivating, giving assurance of a year of plenty such as no unritualized labor could yield; and one need but look into the intense and earnest faces to realize that the whole force of the tribal spirit is here concentrated into a single and living flame.

We should not, of course, infer that all of the symbolic elements which I have described are conscious and explicit in the Indian mind, for this is certainly not the case. Indian symbolism is not, like our own, a mere play of conventional allegory; rather it is a form of speech, as simple and inevitable as one's mother tongue, and uttered with as little consciousness of root-meaning or derived metaphor. And in the ritual life of the Southwest this symbolism has developed as its spontaneous expression the language of ornament and song and motion through which the people seek to communicate with the Powers of that greater Nature of which they feel themselves to be so dependent a part. If I may so put it, the rituals, the *areitos*, represent man's age-old effort to acclimatize himself to a world of Nature within which he is never more than questioningly at home,—for it is a strange fact of our human being that our life is like a sojourn in an alien land, where the language is difficult and the customs hard to acquire. It is only with effort, with toil, earnestness, gesture and act, that we are able to comprehend and to be comprehended, and so to make ourselves at home in the world into which we are born. This, at any rate, is the spirit of the rituals of the Southwest, in their relation to the seasonal year, and to the ever-anxious pleading of mankind, that his tribes also may receive from the arid soil their sustenance.

The intimacy of this sense of dependence is reflected in the physical and social structure of the villages themselves. Most of the Pueblos are divided into moieties, each housed in a division of the town, to this or that side of the plaza; each with its own ceremonial house, and its own ritual roles; and each related to one of the great divisions of Nature as by right of kinship tie. One of the most important functions in the tribe is that of Sun Priest, whose business it is to note the annual journey of the Sun from north to south along the horizon, to announce the dates of the solstitial festivals, and thus to orient the year, with all its feasts, for



the whole people. Sometimes the cacique is the Sun Priest, and sometimes, as at Zuñi, a shrine is built for the Sun, which is in effect the beginning of a sun temple, recalling the type of structure from which eventually developed the elaborated ceremonial plazas of the ancient Maya, with their observatories and dials and solstitial shrines. For everywhere in the world, where human life is dependent upon the recurring seasons, first the solar calendar, and later the whole conception of men's activities, and the range of their histories, rest upon such primitive observation of Nature.

But this Nature is more than observed; its powers are incorporated spiritually into the life of the tribe itself, as if in a wistful way to indicate the desire of men to ally themselves by kinship ties with the great world into which they are born,—with something of the same dramatic pathos, I think, that is to be caught from the affectionate zeal with which the young of domestic animals try to make themselves grateful to their human masters.

In the Southwest one of the most ancient of cults is that of the Hero Twins, the lords of light and protection, who, according to the tradition, led the First People from grim abodes in the Nether Worlds and conquered a place for mankind here under our sun. The Heroes slew the monsters and destroyed the man-eaters of this olden and perilous age; they transformed the giants into great rocks; they made smooth the paths of men and stabilized the quaking earth beneath their feet. Most important of all, it was these, the Twin War-Leaders, who brought back the precious Corn Maidens who had been decoyed afar to the luxurious South, and so saved men from starvation; and they taught men the songs and dances by which they should be able to hold the Maidens fruitful in their midst, ere departing they twain retired to the Medicine Lodge within the hill, which is their abode: where mists are, and shafts of light, and arching rainbows, and glittering dews. And these heroes are none other than the Morning and the Evening Sun—the White Sun of Dawn, which ascends to the Zenith, the Golden Sun of the West, descending to the Gardens of Dusk. They are the same deities shown so frequently in Mexican art—Lord of the East, Lord of the West, with Earth's ball-court between them; and the disk of the sun itself is the ball that bounds over the court as the Game of Time is played out by the heavenly gods. Fragments of the ancient ceremonies are still danced in the Pueblos, fragments that have lingered on in the memories of the oldest men; but they are fragments only, for what is nowadays known as the Sun Dance is certainly no more than a shred of a great and dramatic ritual,—such as must have been danced, before the Curtain fell, on that most wonderful of Sun Temple sites, the point in Mesa Verde Park cutting out into two great canyons and bearing upon its crest the ruins of a building unified in conception as is no other Pueblo edifice, and forming such a fane to the Lords of Light as only a great and thriving population could have maintained. Standing



at this point, on the tableland crest of the world, and gazing down into the sheer depths of the canyons as the rising Sun casts thither the lances of his rays, one can comprehend, as mere books never may teach, the whole magnificent poetry of the Tale of the Ascent of the People: up from the glooms of the first Worlds, into the perfections of this; and one can understand, too, how the great Canticle of the Emergence should have been danced yearly in honor of the Hero Leaders, so that the echoes of its songs and the visions of its epic linger on, even today, in the souls of the tribal elders.

But this spirit of accommodation, Man to Nature, is not all with the Sun, nor all on the sun-blest side of life. There is a fantastic, and in certain aspects a grim obverse in the rituals devoted to the Serpent. The serpent is by nature, one would say, a symbol of the Earth, and by nature and habit perhaps man's most obvious messenger to the Heart of the Earth,—just as the plumed Eagle is his messenger to the Lords of the Skies, the Warrior Gods. The difference between the symbolism of the two is instructive: the eagle plume represents valor, glory, prowess, proclamation; the serpent represents the subtle and hidden knowledge of things masked and secret, he represents the power of healing, and in some related sense also the source of fertility and life—even if at the same time death is in his keeping. These symbolic notions are not peculiar to the Southwest, nor to the New World; the eagle is the Old World image of the sky-herald, the serpent is the Old World messenger of the autochthones. But I do not know that anywhere in the Old World the serpent ever came to assume quite the ritual importance which we find in our Southwest. Best known is the famous Snake Dance, now surviving only among the Hopi, although it was formerly widespread among the Pueblos and existed in Aztec lands. We understand it to be simply a prayer to the sources of fecundity in the world below, to whom the serpents are the chosen messengers. But back of this is another, and more inclusive meaning.

For it is impossible to dissociate the ritual from the mythic serpents, the dance from the legends. Everywhere in Pueblo art appear representations and tales of the scaly and speckled Water Monster, the Horned or Plumed Serpent, who is somehow connected with both Sky and Earth, with the "waters beneath the firmament" and the "waters above the firmament," and for whom legend and ritual alike affirm some special supervision over all birth and growth. He, or his kind, dwells in springs and pools, and sometimes one may see him gleaming in the depths. If the myths are to be trusted—and there are traditions of fact which seem to bear them support,—formerly children were sacrificed to these dwellers in the pools, just as we are told was done in ancient Mexico; and this is the grim side of the daemon's nature. But from another side he is not of the Underworld at all, but of the skies: he is the plumed raincloud, his



belly heavy with moisture, risen from the pools at the World's ends, to float in the heavens, flashing his forked lightnings, and causing the "good of heaven" to descend with nourishment and fecundation to the suckling roots of all green and growing things. He is to be feared, but he is also to be implored, for life and sustenance are his to give; and so we see him honored,—imaged on the kiva altars, impersonated in mask and fetich, embroidered on the dancer's sash, painted on pottery,—everywhere the outward image of that Seed of Life which passes from heaven to earth and gives fruitfulness to all things.

It is through images such as these that we must begin to understand the age-long effort of the mind of a people to body forth its yearnings and understandings in the forms of art. For us, nurtured in the material security of a plentiful sustenance, it is not facile to transport ourselves even in imagination back into a time when each season was faced with anxious question—whether men should be permitted to live on, or whether, perchance, that day had come, when the Powers should no longer receive our human kind. And for us, with a science that gives us to see Nature only at a third remove from sight and hearing and touch and all the varied color and actuality of sense, it is a task also to focus our minds intently at that near and ancient plane wherein the daily Sun, the momentary clouds, the purple and crimson hills that rise visibly before us,—wherein these are the confines of what we may know, and their behaviour is to be only vaguely guessed by peopling them with phantasmic souls, heroic or monstrous. But if we can succeed in such efforts, and bring ourselves to be spiritually at home in this near and dramatic world, then we shall be truly in position to see the Pueblo dances vividly, in their own simple intensity. We shall see them defining the Pattern of Life, the Vita of Man, birth and death, war and victory, supplication and merrymaking, as if in a kind of dramatic portrayal of man's understanding of his own being, saying to Nature, "Behold me, such as I am! Receive me! Permit me to live this life which I show unto you!" And we shall see also, the tribes of men cognizant of their intimate companionship with those Beings, their kindred, who form the Spirit Household in Nature's great Dwelling-Place. For in this vast *areito* there dance not only men and women, old and young, of the People who are men and mortals, but the whole host of the shining gods are there, they also, dancing the life of the world. There, if our eyes are keen, we shall behold the Hero Twins luring the coy and lovely Corn Maidens forth from their retreat in the Pools of Mist and Flowers; there the mad Piper, He-Who-Sounds-His-Flute-from-the-Clouds, god of flowers and dews and butterflies; there the wise Rainbow-Woman, whose body is the slender arch over the caverns where dwells Avanyu, the Plumed Serpent; there the Giant Messengers of the gods above and their Serpent Envoys to the world beneath; and there also the Ancients of the People themselves, who have passed in former times on



into the Dance Lodges of the spirits. The whole cohesive forces of the human mind and body, active with life, leap as it were into a flame-like aspiration toward a unity of Man and Nature, which is, in fact, a philosophy, a religion, and an art, welded into one expression. And seeing this with believing eyes, we can understand at last the rapt absorption of the faces of the dancers, stark with emotion, uplifted with inspiration, intense with supplication. The whole throng moves as one being, like a single wave of life beating its rhythmic time out against the eternal phantom of mesa and mountain-peak, which are its coast.

In all this I have sought to make vivid the spirit which generated the Pueblo areitos during the long centuries which measured the adoption physical and spiritual, of the village peoples of the Southwest into their beautiful but little complaisant world. Out of some unfathomed past they emerged into an intense and conscious social solidarity, acclimatized to their own arid Nature, and cemented with ritual bonds which hold even into our own day despite the attritions of time and the fateful chance of their encounters with a stronger race. That the coming of the white men has modified the old culture and its expressions none may deny; the wonder is that it has not yet utterly destroyed them. Certainly, in spite of their stubborn, rooted hold, the old ceremonies have been breaking down, these three centuries, and where not destroyed their spirit has changed. At least in those villages which are in close proximity to the white man's towns, or where the native resistance is feebler, the ceremonies are either disappearing or are being transformed from intrinsic and religious to consciously artistic festivals. This latter change is not to be regretted; for in the first place there are elements in the old ritual order, some cruel, some licentious, which ought to pass, and ought to be remembered no more, and only a change of spirit can eradicate them; and in the second place, if what is beautiful—and there is much that is so in a very great sense,—if this is to be preserved, it can be kept only by arousing in the minds of the Indians themselves a sense of the artistic value and the artistic possibilities of their own ancient festivals. With the wealth of magnificent myth that lies behind the rituals, with their beauty of music and color and form, with their intense drama, and the inspiration of such a natural setting as the European world has never known, here, in our Southwest, are the possibilities for the birth of a new and native artistic genius which might rival the best that our ancestral continent has produced, and in any case could add a superb chapter to the history of the achievements of the human spirit. We, therefore, who have touched with a blighting hand the native cultures of America, should be first to make such amend as we can, and in every possible way to encourage the Indian to make his own arts live on, if not in the old intimate alliance, at least in the form of an art which is to be first his own, and then ours through his teachings. And it is to this end that the Renaissance of Indian art in the Southwest is today directing its energies.



What is possible for us to do may in part be gauged from what has been done in the past years through another white's man influence than our own, through the Spanish influence, in creating for the Indian new images and new modes of thought. For during the three centuries and more that this influence has been felt in the Pueblo lands it has brought forth in the arts of life and in the forms of expression of Indian genius very much that has enriched what pre-existed as a native foundation. The more varied agriculture, the shepherding, the wool fabrics, the silversmithing, these are only some of the more material additions of elements which have become incorporate in Indian culture; and in the ideal realm there is all that the Mission Fathers have done to make Christianity also living. That this Christianity, like the weaving and the silversmithing, has taken on a characteristic Indian tone is not to be either for our wonder or our concern; for this is what must be if the religion is to live in the new land—as surely the Padres and Frailes have understood. And so it is that the spirit of the areito enters here also, and at the great fiestas the Church has its rôle to enact and its varicolored drama to bring to the enrichment of the village life.

There are other forms also, mysteries or miracles brought northward from an earlier amalgamation in Aztec lands. I have in mind particularly "Los Matachinos"—the drama of Montezuma and the little Malinche, representing the triumph of Christianity over the devils of paganism, this ostensibly, but representing also, and quite unconsciously, an older and more ancient native drama, which is none other than the Messianic Return of the God of Light and Life, to bring again joy and serenity into the land. The conception of the Messiah and the hope for His Advent is very ancient in America, long antedating the day of Columbus. It was known familiarly from southern Colorado to the confines of Argentina, and it lingers on in a score of forms, native and Christian, throughout this whole vast area. But nowhere is it more touched with dramatic pathos than in the rumor which throughout Pueblo land has invested the fated last lord of the Aztecs with this poetic promise, of one day returning to his People to restore them to glory. It is the sunset dream of a folk whose faith has been turned Sunwards since the day of the Great Emergence, but it is a dream which is big with promise of a beautiful flowering in the art of their and our morrow.





FROM A COLOR DRAWING BY AN OGLALA SIOUX

## The Pictorial and Pictographic Art of the Indians of North America

**W**ITHOUT doubt the most momentous of all human inventions is that of the art of writing. The living experience of any one human being, or of a generation, or indeed of such groups of generations as can hold themselves linked in memory and tradition is in each case far too limited to permit its serving as base for the erection of a true civilization. Civilization does not come into existence until men can add to the resources of their own day and generation some record of the experiences of other times and other groups, conveyed with the lessons which accompany every vital trying out of our world. Civilization, in other words, is possible only where men have conscious history. The art of writing, therefore, which is the sole vehicle for the transmission of historic knowledge, in the precise sense, is the key which has held open the doors of the past to human intelligence, and thereby has enabled man to pass from barbarism to civilization, from dim dependence upon the flicker of oral tradition to the creation of letters in that broad sense which makes letters inclusive of all that the mind has to glean from the process of living, and permits science and poetry as well as the teaching of political events to be preserved for the imagination and recurrently instated within the vital experience of each changing age.



Having such a dramatic significance in relation to the whole of human life, any light which may be shed upon the origins of writing or upon the psychical needs which first impelled mankind towards its discovery becomes for us a special and prized illumination. That the art was not an invention in the sense of a suddenly inspired device,—such as the bow and arrow must have been, for example,—is very certain. Writing belongs rather to the class of discoveries which, like the art of cultivating grains, must have come to perfection through permutations hardly noticeable in their day; the whole following out a curve of progress similar to those which we note in the year-to-year improvements of such machines as the automobile or the radio; only, in this ancient case, vastly more slowly. This, however, adds to the interest; for it is such gradual, evolutionary discoveries, impelled by half-conscious need, that best fall in with that essential form of a human nature which is at once finding and creating itself.

This is true, at all events, where the process is under observation. For Old World history observation cannot be; the origins of writing are lost in a past so dim that only conjecture can restore its outlines. But by the happy chance of the discovery of "the New World called America" (as the titles have it), here on our own shores is the very simulacrum of what must have been the form and substance of the invention of writing in our ancestral continents, and almost the full series of the transitions of that invention. For here we have, in the native expression of the tribes of the Red Man, image and symbol, mnemonic score and pictographic record, monumental glyph and cursive manuscript,—the very series that we surmise for the foundation of Old World civilization,—and we have it for the most part in living forms and uses. The study of such a series ought assuredly to give us some keener sense of the psychical impetus which directs all our advancement on into our humanity, and it may even add to this some philosophical inferences as to the role of that humanity in the whole order of nature.

My present purpose is not to discuss all of the range of the development which I am indicating; rather, I must restrict myself to a definite field within it. Nevertheless, for the sake of perspective, I should like to call attention to the several manifestations of the pictorial instinct which eventuate in writing, as these are represented in North America. No doubt the most primitive is the simple image, painted or modelled or inscribed, such as may be seen upon smooth-faced rocks—man's earliest manuscript pages—all over North America and throughout the inhabited continents. These rock-scratched images vary from indecipherable scrawls to well-executed animal and floral forms and geometric figures that at times approach linear script in character and that are certainly symbolic in meaning. Very likely the majority express no more than an idle desire to occupy the hand—as with us, when we initial an inviting surface; but



such an explanation can hold only in part, for in many cases the rock-drawings are done under difficulties that can have been met only because of serious purpose, whilst in not a few the meaning is reasonably evident. In these certainly we have a definite effort to communicate, whether with the world of nature or of man.

The use of images appears, of course, in many other than glyphic forms. In costume or utensil decoration, conventionalized or naturalistic, it is everywhere present, painted, embroidered, carved, incised, modelled. But in such uses it has quite generally passed on into a second stage of expression, the symbolic. Indian symbolism is a gingerly subject. Due perhaps to the great role which symbolic expression has played in the artistic development of Old World cultures, we whites have an inveterate credulity in the matter of literary meanings that make difficult for us the comprehension even of the works of our own graphic and plastic artists; seeing a picture, even a landscape or a portrait, we ask what it *means* in spite of the protective effort of the artist to proclaim through some evasive title—"The Lady in Green," "Nocturne," "Purple Heather," or what-not,—that his only concern is with the eye and the mind's eye, and not at all with vocabulary mottoes. And when we carry this same curiosity over to Indian art, we embog in like miscomprehensions. For the Indian artist also speaks to the eye and the mind's eye, and rarely possesses any sense of literary or verbal meanings. When put to it, he will give verbal meanings; but for the sake of politeness, salesmanship, or amusement with white curiosity, as much as for any intrinsic truth. The symbol is there, but not at all in our artificial sense of symbolism: it is present as the expression and token of certain felt relationships, which place man in his world.

There are decorations, for example, that are appropriate to the costumes of men, others to those of women, others for children; there are marks and crests that designate clan and tribal kinships; there are insignia that mean war and peace, life and death, joy and grief, feasting and fasting; and all of these combine to define for each individual a series of permitted and forbidden designations, in color and form, which proclaim to his world the wearer's status in it. The same thing is true even of utensils: certain emblems belong to the weapon, others to the water-jar or the food-basket, others to the Medicine Pipe or the ceremonial drum. In fact, pipe and tomahawk, feathers and blanket, beadwork, quillwork, facepaint, mask, all combine into a symbolism of colors and shapes which are in themselves a portrait of the tribesman's life, at least to the tribesman who has been reared in their understanding. And it is in this sense most of all that Indian art is symbolic.

The range of this symbolic expression naturally varies greatly among differing Indian groups. With some, the "Digger" type, it amounts to little more than a differentiation of costume for the sexes. With others, as on the Northwest Coast, it attains to an elaboration of totemic heraldry



that is quite comparable to that of the Mediaeval chivalry of Europe or of the feudal families of Japan, and here it approaches the very verge of recorded history and developed picture-writing. Again, as among the Pueblos, it becomes an elaborated ceremonial symbolism, primarily religious, and akin to the symbolisms of Buddhism and Christianity, or to that of the priestly hierarchies of Egypt. While for a third example, in the meticulously elaborated warrior symbolism of the Great Plains we have a language of prowess that is as eloquent as words. Such are the varied impulses which lie at the roots of symbolic expression, and develop, wherever men grow into a living cultural consciousness, into the forms of an art that is also a medium of communication, whether of man with man or of men with gods.

Picture-writing in the truer sense, however, belongs to a third stage, a step beyond the symbolism which we have been describing. In order to have true picture-writing events must be given location in time and space, given location and given their character; and with this localization and characterization of events we have the beginnings of history. This third stage was attained by more than one Indian group. Its simplest aspect (from the point of view of writing, not necessarily from the point of view of art) is that of the image fashioned not as likeness or as symbol but as illustration; it is with the picture which is the picture of an event, an historical happening, that picture-writing truly begins. In this form it may develop and does develop into two quite different things: first, through a primary concern simply for record into a symbolic schematism which may become conventionalized into formal writing; and second, through devotion to the details of the event into the artistic picture, which becomes as much decoration as record. In general, the first line of development was that chiefly pursued among the tribes of the Forest Region, while the second found its greatest floruit among the warrior nations of the Great Plains. Both elements are, however, present in each of these and in other centers of native culture.

Pictorial art conceived as illustration reflects very directly the dominant interests within the culture of which it is an expression. The two regions where this art is most developed are the Pueblo and the Great Plains regions, and it is instructive to note the contrasting spirits of the artistic interests in these two regions. In the Southwest nearly all the paintings are ritualistic in inspiration; the ceremonials and the beautiful costumes of the dancers form the dominant themes, and even where the theme is secular, a buffalo hunt, a mounted warrior, still the art is close to the spirit of the ritualism that pervades all Pueblo life. But on the Plains the whole cast of the art is different: here the picture is chiefly an adjunct of the heraldic glorification of the warrior; the picture is of the deed of arms, the exploit; and it is meant to be painted on blanket or tipi as the outward proclamation of the valor and prowess of the man it cele-



brates; so that the art of painting has here something of the purpose and character of the ballad in old English letters, or perhaps of the epic in Homeric tradition. Indeed, there is an epic quality in this art, just as epic character is found in the ideals of the life which it symbolizes—a martial and moving inspiration which gives to Plains Indian painting high place in native American art.

But pictorial art is used not alone to illustrate epic deed; in a further development it is a reading of mythic or legendary events. In this form it is encountered among the Totemic Indians of the Northwest; in the cartoons preserved by Schoolcraft from the Iroquois of the Forests; in Navaho sand-paintings; and not infrequently in the pictorial art of the Plains. Sometimes the picture is a mere memorial of the myth, no more than a mnemonic scrawl; again, it is a traditional representation elaborated in art and sanctified by tradition. In each case, it betokens one more advance in the means of expressing thought, for now it deals not with things seen by the mortal eye, but only with the objects of imagination, events from the realm of the superhuman and invisible world reduced to the focus of our physical seeing. Images of dream creatures, revealed in fast and vigil; images of the Ancients, who walked on earth before men attained to their true human form; dramatic portrayals of the deeds that shaped this world for human habitation,—all these, and others find place as themes for this pictorial art.

We have noted then three stages: the primitive image, scrawl or decoration; the symbol, social and heraldic; the pictorial illustration, depicting an event in actual or in mythic time. The beginnings of what may truly be called writing, picture-writing, are already in hand. It remains to carry forward their development. The most elementary form of genuine pictography is the personal mnemonic record, done in more or less schematic ideograms. A man goes upon a hunting or a war-making expedition; he perceives a vision in fast or dream; he invents or is taught a new song; and for his personal help he wishes memorials of these matters. It is then that he resorts to pictography, recording his experience in a series of images that represent ideas rather than portray likenesses; and thus picture-writing is created. At its simplest this pictography may consist in no more than a crude totemic painting or badge, preserved as "medicine" in lieu of the real object, or as its symbol,—the zig-zag for a flash of lightning, the horned cranium for the bison, the eagle plume for a trophy or for the power it represents,—a line suffices and the idea is expressed; and where action is involved a series of such images is capable of recounting it. Notable among records of this description are the hunting-counts of the Eskimo, etched on ivory and capable of recounting the events of prolonged expeditions, journeys by land and sea, night-stops, the day's catch, chance encounters, all represented by simple ideograms. The same conceptions appear in the pictographic records of the Plains and Forest



Indians. Medicine men, too, frequently make use of devices of this kind to enable them the better to keep in mind the order of ritual acts and the content of the songs which accompany their rites.

Once such a device is invented for mnemonic purposes it becomes only a matter of convention and habit to carry it forward into a true system of symbolism, first of ideas and then of words; for a name naturally attaches to each sign, so that eventually the sign becomes a verbal image. Inevitably abstract ideas get themselves expressed by symbols of this mnemonic character taking form in the composition of illustrative records where the pictorial impulse is still the dominant, just as in Christian art the nimbus, the cross, the trefoil, or other symbols appear not only as ornament but as guides to meaning; we then speak of the sign as an ideogram. One of the most natural and most widely used types of such ideograms in Indian writing is that of the footprints of animals. Footprints are, as it were, left by the creatures themselves as their own tokens, and to trail-following hunters must have been from the first the most evident of signs. On old rock-cut inscriptions among the frequent tokens are unmistakable bear-feet and the spurred indications of the foot of the turkey, while since the introduction of the horse, the equestrian tribes freely employ the horse-shoe curve as an image both of the animal and of the trail. Human footprints are also found, and not infrequently in connection with diagrammatic lines which probably indicate either a trail-map or the figure of a ceremonial dance,—for we should remember that there is an ideography in the dance also, which not infrequently describes a symbolic outline upon the earth itself, a form which may readily become in sketch the ideogram of the dance itself.

Men, however, are more likely to be represented by the hand or head than the foot. The hand is a frequent emblem: painted black, upon pony or shield, it may be the proclamation of a man slain by the warrior; painted red, of a man wounded,—for colors, too, enter into the symbolic speech in a multitude of ways. As is well known the Plains Indians developed a "sign" or "gesture language," mainly of hand gesture, that enabled them to communicate freely in spite of their diversity of speech, for it was perfected to a degree which made of it a true *lingua franca*. It is possible that this language itself had some influence on pictography and it might indeed readily have developed a pictographic system that could have given to America a wholly original and a wholly competent system of writing. There is, however, relatively little influence of gesture language shown in the pictographs as we know them. In pictography the head is a more speaking sign than the hand. By a brief indication of the hairdressing the tribe of the individual as well as the sex may be indicated, while the addition of facepaint or of some name-emblem will designate the individual. In this fashion the Siouan chiefs Big Road and Red Cloud made rosters of their followers.



Natural phenomena are only less subject to ready representation than are men and animals. A zig-zag may represent the lightning; it is equally appropriate for a mountain range, or, in a cluster of sharp points, for an encampment of tipis; fortified by parallel repetition or modified into a wave it may stand for water, lake or river. The heavenly bodies become readily conventionalized, the Sun, the Moon and the Morning Star in forms both geometrical and mythic, and it is only a step from this to the representation of the whole House of the Sun, with his Summer and his Winter Trails, which brings us to the very verge of Calendric symbolism. Again, supernatural beings are indicated. The Thunderbird and the plumed Serpent appear in many and repeating forms, and wherever an animal—Turtle or Elk, Bear or Bison,—is the emblem of a superhuman Power, the added touch of a calumet or some other indication of reverence will suffice to designate his character, just as the emblem serves to distinguish the rank of a chieftain among men. Finally, there are emblems of action and of abstract ideas. A line from the mouth indicates speech; a spot indicates a wound, or it may be that a spotted body or limb will indicate that the individual has been many times "shot" by the magic of the Medicine Powers; the Sioux employ a curious and complicated curve as a symbol of pain; placed upon a body it indicates death accompanied by pains in the part indicated. The Sioux also indicate a cycle of time by a circle, and a circle surrounded by a ring of tipis represents the cycle of a man's life, seventy years, which is the foundation of their native chronological measure. Here the emblem is still remotely pictorial, for measuring-time (as distinguished from measured-time) returns upon itself, wheel-like, and the circle thus becomes its natural symbol, the round of the heaven and the wheel of the horizon uniting in idea both time and space,—a conception indicated in many ornamental designs, where the four quarters of earth and the four stations of the sun are shown by color and cross within the circle, and symbolize day and year as well as the divisions of terrestrial and celestial space.

Inevitably all of these pictographic emblems tend towards a conventionalization in which their pictorial significance is quite lost. Adapted to weaving or beadwork they become mere motives; and again patterns purely decorative in origin, acquire through repeated and varied use a kind of symbolic meaning which may be merely associated with the names by which they have come to be known. This seems to be certainly true of the decorative designs of Pueblo pottery and it is probably not less so of those of bead and quill embroidery. The pattern becomes the property of man or clan or idea and thus writes its own message, as when a Siouan moccasin with a border of triangles is read as "the nation of the Dakota rounding out the horizon with their tipis," or on a Winnebago grave a line tells that the buried man has done his part on the warpath, while with an arc added it announces that he has been a war leader. With a system of



such marks widely recognized writing will have become systematic and documents capable of transmitting fact and history become possible.

This documentary stage is achieved in several classes of Indian pictographic records. The oldest known to us, north of Mexico, are the wampum treaty belts preserved in a few examples from the Forest Indians of the east. Wampum beads are pre-Columbian; they were made from periwinkle shells, the coasts of Long Island Sound having been one of the centers of the industry, and, as our histories tell us, wampum was of such value that it passed for money among whites as among Indians in the first days of the settlement. The beads are of two colors, whitish and purple, and combined they are capable of giving clear-cut patterns, analogous to the patterns which the same Indians admired upon the bark of the birch, cutting through the dark outer coating of the bark to the white inner skin, in a sort of etching process. Both forms probably hark back to a still more primitive painting upon skins or wood.

With wampum records in antiquity must be reckoned the use of tallies or counting sticks. These are the natural emblems of number, and they were employed not only in games, like a sort of dice, but symbolically for gifts and goods. Thus a peeled wand is still among the Plains tribes the token of a pony, and is so employed in ritual giving. Again, bundles of sticks are used as mnemonic aids as well as ceremonial symbols. Dr. Gilmore received from Four Rings the Arikara version of the creation of the world and the emergence of the Arikara from the Underworld, all dramatically told by aid of a bundle of thirty-four wands, deposited as the story progressed in a pattern which symbolized the laying out of the quarters of the earth, the establishment of the Powers of Nature, and the episodes of the advent of the First People. A sketch of the traditional arrangement of the wands would immediately recall to the initiated Indian the whole mythic tale. Finally, notched and inscribed sticks are employed as both calendric and ritual records, the notches being counted like the beads of a rosary to bring to mind the full series. The famous Medicine sticks of Tenskwatawa were similar, although here, not notches but paneled emblems conveyed the message which was sent by the prophet to leaders of many tribes. With such resources of written expression it is not surprising that formal documents were attempted—veritable books, analogous in type and form to those which marked the beginnings of literary art in the Old World. Parchment, or prepared skins, wooden strips or tablets, and paper, are the materials which the book-making art has developed as suitable for writings, and each of these types has its American representative. The prepared skin was (its use is not altogether gone) the material chiefly employed by the hunting tribes of the Plains, and it may very likely represent the most primitive material for writing. But in the Forest Region, especially among the Algonquian tribes of the north, the bark of the birch, with its coats of contrasting color, was found



suitable first for ornament and then for writing, and finally was prepared in tablet-like forms for inscription purposes. Finally, in Mexico, a true paper was invented in pre-Columbian times, formed from the fibre of the agave, the papyrus of the New World. When such materials are inscribed with records meant to be not merely temporary accounts or transient messages, but preservers of wisdom and tradition, then we have true books and a genuine literature.

Documents of this sort, as distinguished by subject-matter, fall into three classes: first, those devoted to the recording of memorable events, and these are history; second, those which are calendric in character, devoted to the measurement of astronomical time, and they are science; and third, those devoted to the preservation of ritual and mythic lore, and such represent religion. The calendric element is inevitably associated with either the historical or the religious, but there exist documents in both these latter classes without the calendric element; so that in any case we are justified in saying that these three great fundamentals of human civilization, History, Science, and Religion, have their native and independent American expression.

It is true that north of Mexico, where the most important codices are ritual calendars, the scientific knowledge is slight, represented by the bare beginnings of number and astronomical observation. A Kiowa calendar blanket distinguishes years by bars and moons by crescents, to each a token being attached to indicate the event which distinguishes it; but this blanket is really no more than a chronological count. The Dakota system, however, in which a cycle of years is represented by a tipi circle, is a true, even if crude, chronometric unit, and in the famous cycles of Battiste Good Dakota history is carried back to the beginning of the tenth century, to the year 901 A. D., to be exact. However, as in similar records of peoples emerging from barbarism, the earlier centuries are denoted by what must be mainly mythical events. From the year 1700 on the record is regarded as historical, and it is in large part corroborated by other Siouan chronologies, or "Winter-Counts," the making of which apparently is still in process, for few tribes of American Indians show so high a development of the historic sense as do the Dakota.

In Battiste Good's record it is interesting to note that the events which mark the chronological Eras are of the nature of cultural revolutions. The Dakota, according to their tradition, were a people long before the appearance of the White Buffalo Cow, which is the event he places at the beginning of the record. The Cow, as the story recounts, appeared miraculously, gave the people dominion over the prairies, and promised them abundance of buffalo for their food. In all probability, the story commemorates the advent of the Siouan peoples into the buffalo country, and some change in their manner of life due to the finding of this new and



plentiful food resource. The event which marks the year 1700 was not less revolutionary, that year marking the first attempt of the Dakota to hunt buffalo on horseback. Within a generation they were transformed into an equestrian race, and the whole character and complexion of Plains Indian culture rapidly changed, agriculture diminishing and war increasing with the extension of the tribal hunting grounds made possible by the new-found agency of the horse. It is another parallel of Old and New World history, for the appearance of the horse as a new and terrible engine of war rocked the ancient world and overthrew empires in as brief a term of years toward the beginning of the second millenium before Christ, and until the formation of the Greek phalanx cavalry ruled the world.

Siouan historical records were originally painted upon dressed hides, the pictographs running in a spiral, counter-sun in direction, beginning at the center of the hide; since the advent of the white, cloth and paper books have been used. Among the Forest Indians strips of bark seem to have afforded the favored material, although hides also have been employed. The most famous historical document of the Forest Indians is the Delaware *Walam Olum*, or "Red Paint Tally," edited with text by Brinton. This is a pictographic chronology, recording the tribal migrations through a long series of years, and identifying at least one important date by the appearance of Hendrik Hudson's "Half Moon," or some similar white man's vessel, in a readily recognizable drawing. The document as a whole shows that the eastern tribes, like the Sioux, had a developed historical sense,—a fact which is in another way substantiated through the body of historical traditions handed down orally. No doubt numbers of written documents of the type of the *Walam Olum* have been lost and destroyed.

The pictography of the Forest Indians closely resembles that of the Plains tribes; the chief difference is due to the differing technique of execution, etched bark or incised wood as against painted skins. But especially among the Ojibwa and Menominee there are found records of a type rare or wanting on the Plains, ceremonial records chiefly pertaining to the Midé society, which are partly charts and partly mnemonic songs. These possess in one way a very distinct interest; and this is from the fact that the art of pictography is used for the recording of speech. Each sign represents a song in some of the documents, and while the image is still primarily mnemonic, for the initiates it becomes truly verbal in character. Here we reach the stage where writing represents words, and only the phonetic analysis is wanting in order that the instrument may become perfected. In ancient Mexico and Yucatan phonetic signs had in fact appeared before the discovery, being used, as in the Egyptian hieroglyphic, along with ideograms. The final step to alphabetic writing was made early in the Nineteenth century, within the United States, by Sequoyah, whose invention of the Cherokee alphabet, imitation of the white man's letters though it be, is surely one of the most remarkable achievements of Indian



intelligence. When we remember that it is only in our own century that the great civilization of the Chinese is moving towards a perfected phonetic writing, we can but give the more admiration to this native American who fulfilled the instincts of his people in devising this instrument for native letters; and it is thus that we see completed by the Indian race, the cycle which passes from the first crude-scrawled images to the fulfilled discovery of the greatest of human inventions, the art of writing.

At the outset of my discussion I remarked that it is the discovery of the art of writing that stands at the source and head of human civilization. But I think that it would be a poor psychology which should permit us to rest with the external fact of the possession or acquisition of such an art as an index of culture rather than urge us to carry our inquiry a step further, and demand what it is in the human spirit itself which impels us to such an acquisition, or what, in other words, is the drive in our natures which speeds us on into the thing called civilization. Perhaps now that we have made even this cursory survey of the American Indian's effort to make and preserve records of his thought, certain features of this inner impulse are revealed, features which still stand out in the achieved work of humanity as deep-set and little deviating tendencies of our character as men. I refer to the impulses which incite men to literary expression, and give rise in the end to the great edifices of learning which constitute our arts and our sciences and give meaning to our histories and our ideals. While for Indian pictography there is a source in practical need—for memoranda, for messages—nevertheless the major impulses are the sense for history and concern for ritual perfection. These mean the desire of communication to posterity and of communion with Powers that are above the human, and in both of these aspects they indicate an effort to see life apart from immediate and personal destinies and in relation to that whole movement of Nature which has created in us an especial human nature. Wherever men rise to such a point of view, striving to grasp their narrow and local fates through perception of their own place within a vaster human evolution, there we have the fundamental and central motive of civilization and the inspiration to all progress that is more than material show; and I might indeed say that no degree of material comfort nor of mastery of mechanical device can in itself constitute either the substance or the condition of civilized life, and that the spirit of civilization lives and can live only where are active the impulses which create letters and art, and urge men forward toward a cleaner knowledge of themselves and of their gods. The North American Indian, in many of his nations, was under the hold of these impulses, and he had advanced far enough in the mastery of the technique of expression so that what he had to say is not wholly lost to his fellow men.

Further, and this is perhaps of even more moment, he had succeeded in his efforts at expressing the meaning of life as he knew it, in adding an



aesthetic color that the world had not elsewhere discovered. For our American Indian art, developing its own symbolism and its own realism, its decorative styles and its characteristic application, has incorporated as in an expressive moment the essence of the Indian view of life. This is not other than has been the function of art among Old World peoples; Greek art or Christian or Buddhist, each in its time and terrain has unified in its expression the soul of a great human experience, intimately associating a world of meanings with the form and color of visible monuments and the interpretations of rites and of letters. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive any respectable art as being divorced from meaning in this broad and comprehensive sense, and it is not unduly imaginative to assign the invention of letters, even as a device of communication, to the same deep impulse of our humanity as is that which gives rise to all creation of beauty. Art and letters have a kindred purpose of carrying thought and understanding out into a world of ideas freed from the time-serving which marks our mere animal necessities. The symbolism of Indian pictography in its close relationship to his whole artistic expression is but one more illustration of the fact that the aesthetic impulse cannot be understood apart from the philosophic and that the soul of all art is its meaning.



## Monumental Architecture

### I



MY theme is not monuments of architecture, for I am not primarily concerned with the masterpieces of architectural history. It is even less architectural monuments, for even less am I thinking of edifices erected for commemoration or of architecture as an adjunct of commemorative sculpture. But I am thinking of architecture in the highest sense in which it can be said to possess style, and that is as in itself embodying forms of idealistic expression capable of portraying the genius of a people or of a period, and therefore as being in itself monumental. I am thinking of architecture as that art which more clearly than any other, and indeed as dominating and guiding the others, speaks the character of the civilization which produces it and gives, as it were, the rubrics of the chapter which that civilization adds to the "Book of the Interpretation of the Meaning of Humanity," which is what history is.

Seen in wide angle and with full perspective, the thing which we call the material world falls into two great and dissevered segments: on the one hand, physical Nature; on the other, the handiwork of Man. The light of heaven and earth's geography gives us the one; the hewing and shaping, harnessing and spanning of lands and waters with houses and cities, with roads and bridges, canals and power plants, shows us the other; and in its very description we cannot miss the sharpness of that contrast of which I speak. For human architecture is in some sense a war upon the forms in which Nature has cast her physical being; we, as men, are dissatisfied with the shapes of rocks and hills and streams, and to the height of our power we reconstrue them the better to satisfy our wills and the better to embody that human meaning which we demand of our world that it incorporate. For our moment at least the Earth is ours—that is our attitude,—and we propose to compel it into forms which suit the ideals of the humanity we are bent upon expressing. And so we chart our lands and build our edifices, like trenches and outworks of a slowly advancing army, proclaiming to brute matter our purpose of conquest and inwardly evincing to ourselves what we believe that the law and order and power and beauty of our own full-realized nature should be.

I often think that the modern biological view of "man's place in nature," which would make of us merely the latest pumpkin on the vine or, from the point of view of animal dispersion, the hardiest and most adaptable of weeds, that this view is as fatally wrong as is possible. My own figure for our situation—here as embodied men on this our physical terrain,—is rather the analogy of the Roman castrum in the days of Cæsar.



Built in a clearing of the tenebrous forests of north Europe; upreared of logs wrested from the very land which was its footing; laid out in grimly mathematical rectangles, with street and quarter, wall and foss; connecting by an unrelinquishable man-path with the great tradition which was Imperial Rome; and within itself establishing the seat of all that then existed to represent Law and Reason,—such a castrum was architectural in the truest and fullest sense; it meant human mastery and human civilization extending out into the black boundaries which forever engulf our kind, to create in at least one illumined zone our Castle of Light. Monumental architecture, everywhere, to me means what such a castrum means.

## II

Consider first architectural lines and forms. No matter from what level of achievement our illustrations may be drawn they show one invariable characteristic: what Plato said of God is true of the architect, he “always geometrizes.” Whether straight line or curve, whether the form be cubical or spherical, conical or polyhedral in pattern, architecture breaks as abruptly as it may with the disarray of an untrimmed nature, striving in its simplest expressions to at least suggest a definable *idea*, a form, which is primarily some imitation of the patterning ideas of geometry. The thing itself is indeed curious, and to my mind represents an unsolved mystery, this bent for mathematical regularity, amounting to a passion, which marks out the whole path of man’s progress with his rectangles and his circles, his pyramids and domes. Such forms are found in nature, but so sparsely that they always impress us as anomalous; and it is as if in a kind of rebuke of nature’s incompetence, or rebuttal of her chaotic argument, that we insist that our own impress upon her shall be in the unmistakable abstraction of mathematical thought. It is true that when we too rigidly construct our plats and plans by the geometrician’s rules, we are led by some countering instinct of the artistic sense to modify and modulate the lines; but this is never more than in a secondary sense: the dominating form is that of pure mathematics, and we demand the mathematical characters of symmetry and balance, of ratio and proportion, even in the most purely picturesque of our designs.

The source of this instinct for architectural geometrizing is difficult to fathom. We can hardly suppose it to have been keen,—though no doubt it was potentially present,—in man the cave-dweller; but we can never evade it in man the builder, from Stonehenge to New York. Very likely it is in part due to our finitude: regular forms are intelligible to us just as play-blocks are intelligible to children, and we care for symmetry partly for the reason that repetition is easier than novelty. Then, too, there is a whole set of vital, physiological analogies which make rhythm, balance, scale, imperative just for reason’s sake. Nevertheless, with allowance for all of these, there is still something to be added, something metaphysically



deep in our human constitution, and beyond us deep in the world which is our parent, before we can arrive at the full foundations of the significance of architectural form.

We may approach the question from a psychological angle, that which deals with the laws of æsthetic vision. In so far as architecture is an art,—conceived apart from the primary utilities of shelter and trail,—it is an art for the sense of sight, and it shares therefore the laws which govern all pictorial representation. There are three modes, or perhaps I should say levels, in which vision is æsthetic, and with reference to which works of art are created. Each of these implies in architecture its own stylistic qualities, and beyond the stylistic perhaps also moral and intellectual qualities of that in our nature which finds expression in architecture. But before defining these modes, I must indicate something which is the preliminary to all æsthetic appreciation, namely, the demand for a bodily rest. For a position of at least momentary repose is the implied condition of the whole æsthetic attitude. I cannot here enter into the psychological detail: but the first initiation which any of us may have in the understanding of beauty is what in psychology we should call the dissociation of motor and sensory, that is, the disconnection of our sense-perception from its normally immediate relation to action of some kind, especially to bodily movement. There is a kind of tabu to bodily locomotion which is represented by the frame which marks off as pictorial and scenic space the space shown within the painting; which is proclaimed by the proscenium arch that allegorizes the action of the stage; which is symbolized by the chair which invites us to sit during the concert; and which indeed is imposed by whatever *form* gives to poetry and music and painting alike their abstraction in time and space out of that time and space in which we habitually live and move. Beauty begins with repose: this is an ancient and authentic law which no art may contravene.

It is a law as true for architecture as for its sister (or shall I say, its offspring) arts. The quality of a building or of a group of buildings, judged as art, is in no small degree determined by the number of points of vantage from which it can yield pictorial views that command us to stand in our tracks in order to see. Such views may be distant or near, exterior or interior, but each is a unit with definable character; and if each is not only fair in itself but if it be also supplemental of the others,—so that as we pass from one to the other the idea of the edifice “grows upon us,” as we say, each separate vision bespeaking another that is more comprehensive and penetrating,—then we are in the presence of architectural art of the highest competence. It is true that there are famous buildings, and even styles, which take into account no more than one type of æsthetic vision; and it is true that the art may be justified as art by this one type; but it is also true, I think, that the more numerous and integral are the forms of vision which the work yields, the more fully will it express the



end and genius of architecture. This is a truth of some moment in the study of the history not only of architectural styles but also of the civilizations which styles express; but before touching upon such a theme it is important that there be given a closer definition of the visual modes themselves.

The first of these modes is what I should call plane dimension, or façade vision. All buildings, and at another remove all styles, have fronts or faces, conceived as geometrical planes and susceptible of a pattern decoration, whether this be formed through the arrangement of lines and values inherent in the structure itself or through applied ornament. In every case each such vision will fall within a dominant form or frame, which, where the art is excellent, will itself constitute an agreeable shape. Usually the frame is embodied in the major outline of the building, giving to each façade a characteristic outline of its own, rectangular, pyramidal, or even the segment of a circle; but it is of course true that in many cases the form is suggested by carefully disposed parts and indicative lines and the frame supplied by the abstractive imagination, and this is, I think, the predominant trait of architecture that is termed picturesque. What we are dealing with is, in fact, something wholly similar to any decoration of space in which the concern is first of all for pattern. Pattern is secured, within the frame, by the harmony and variety of line and form, oriented with respect to base, balanced in relation to the fundamental axes, and accented by appropriate distribution of lights and shades. The whole composition must possess the qualities and the excellences of any patterning of flat spaces; and concern for it as primary yields us an architectural genre of which our commercial "fronts" afford numberless examples. Corresponding to façade vision there is indeed a façade architecture, legitimate but shallow.

In our normal vision very rarely except by an act of abstraction do we see any object or expanse in space as no more than two-dimensional; and it is almost essential that the space be marked by a strong and intelligible decorative pattern in order that we may make this abstraction. What I have called façade vision is thus almost purely æsthetic in its character. This is by no means so true of the second level of vision, namely, tri-dimensional or perspective vision. Nevertheless, perspective vision also is predominantly æsthetic in that it is non-motor, that is, it does not in itself afford the impulse of motion. Ordinarily perspective space-plats, which is what our eyes directly give us, are symbols of possible movements; but the purely perspective forms of visual perception are very decidedly only symbols; we never actually *see* the spaces into which our limbs or our body may move, and when we do move on into the regions which perspectives chart for us, our movement is accompanied, step by step, by the shattering of the visioned relationships, and their constant re-arrangement into new compositions. There is a kind of inherent



contradiction between seeing and moving, such that the one cannot take form without destroying the other. Visually we live in a house of glass which is shattered with every motion, and it is only because the speed of light so vastly exceeds that of our bodily motions that we are able to recompose, with an unnoticed facility, our perspective world. The fact is, however, and it may readily be verified by careful observation, that we sensibly *see* only a kaleidoscopic space, which breaks and composes with astonishing rapidity into an infinite series of pictorial forms.

These pictorial forms, which become definite in proportion as we approach the stationary, constitute the schematisms of our æsthetic vision of perspective space; and it is these which the architect must consider in appealing to perspective vision. As in the case of what I have termed *façade* vision, there must be, first of all, a frame for the forms which he would incorporate in his design, but in this case the frame must define a cubic space, although it will be cubic space seen with the perspective distortion. Again, as in case of *façade* vision, the frame must define a regular shape, tetrahedral or polyhedral or hemispheroid in character. Further, once more like *façade* vision, within this frame there must be a pattern, although now a pattern of planes rather than of lines, with fore and middle and background, with dimension that is shallow or penetrating, and with orientation that may be ascending, overhanging, direct or oblique, but must always be stringently measured by some compositional gnomon formed of the horizontal base and vertical altitude. Finally, it is into such spatial forms that architectural scale enters most directly, all such scale being, in my opinion, ultimately relative to certain norms of our human stature and proportions of our human bodies.

Thus the sense of measure and proportionality of design are everywhere implicit in perspective vision; and it is this, indeed, that gives us in fullest degree the foundation of the artistic composition of spatial forms. Any street or plaza where series of buildings are consciously ordered with respect to their harmonious relationships, one to another, is an illustration of perspective design; and such design dominates the artistic idea of every structure which is conceived as a work of art with respect to more than its fronts, its *façades*.

But there is a third mode of æsthetic vision which differs somewhat radically from each of the preceding. *Façade* vision, I have said, abstracts depth from tridimensional space, and gives us a plane as its object, and the decoration which falls within this is pattern. Perspective vision abstracts from motion, from the whole motor sense, and yields an object which is tridimensional, to be sure, and symbolically penetrable, but actually is as prohibitive of ingress as are the elevations on the architect's blueprints. Within the perspective frame again there is pattern, and pattern which is more complex than that of plane space and necessarily inclu-



sive of the latter, and there is also scale and measure in a sense in which these do not obtain in façade vision, since perspective is at least symbolic of reality in things spatial. But the maximum or full reality even of architectural form is not yet given, and to secure it one more abstraction must be made, involving a leap from the visual to the motor imagination and in a certain fashion restoring to the æsthetic perception all that it had lost through its first renunciation of the moving world.

What I mean is this. The first condition of æsthetic vision is bodily repose; we must pause to look, and in pausing we are relinquishing our instinctive aptitude for regarding every thing seen as an invitation to action; we pass from work or play to contemplation. But once won to contemplation, and with the mind keyed, so to speak, to imaginative insight, we are seldom satisfied until we have restored through imaginative understanding all the reality that our symbol will carry, and this means values like in kind to those of the pragmatic world, but brought back in their contemplative rather than in their pragmatical quality. Applied to architecture this implies that having put ourselves into the mind where we may understand and admire the façade and the perspective, we inevitably proceed to the third level of visual contemplation in which we see, literally and with our imaginative eyes, the rhythms, forces, strains and stresses, lifts and loads, motions and locomotions, incorporated in the mechanism of the structure. Our bodies are still in repose; the tabu to movement still holds, for we are in the realm of art; but the muscular and vital propensities which inhere in our bodies and give meaning to its exercises are now themselves abstracted, made disincarnate, and by the act of the imagination are themselves infused into the very structure of the edifice we are contemplating. We become indeed sustaining and resisting beams and pillars, veritable Caryatides, with the mechanic structure itself for our incarnation.

It is with such vision that we perceive architectural masses, which are not mere spatial bulks, but gravitational weights and burdens. It is with such vision that we appreciate the distinction between an idle and a working colonnade. It is with such vision again that we feel openings as true penetrations, and indeed get all our sense for architectural modeling, which is, truly speaking, as tactual as is that of the sculptor. "Empathy," *infeeling*, is the word which is employed to designate this imaginative interjection of motor or muscular into contemplative thought, and the mode of vision of which I am speaking may properly be called the empathetic mode. And if the designer of the façade may best be likened to the decorator of a plane surface conceived as a plane surface, and the designer of a perspective to a pictorial artist, the architect whose imagination is empathetic is surely most like the sculptor, with whom he shares the necessity of the triple abstraction of which I have spoken. But we must remember that the able architect incorporates in his design not one only



of these three, but all of them, façade and perspective and working mechanism, in a single and central imaginative achievement; and in this degree his task is the most complex of all and his art the most commanding.

### III

I have dwelt with detail upon the discrimination of the three types of æsthetic vision as the necessary equipment for my major theme. For it is my belief that the monumental spirit in architecture is most symptomatically shown in the modes and qualities of the æsthetic vision which it evokes, and again that the very character of the culture which expresses itself in architectural monuments is indicated by the values which each age and art finds in these same modes and qualities. Furthermore, styles in architecture, like the styles of the civilizations which they index, are most readily by their employment of such values placed within the arc of the rise and fall of those experiments in human living which we call culture periods. In short, the history of civilization as well as that of edifices has its façade and its perspective and its empathetic moments of vision, our guides perchance to all that marks the movement of the human spirit on through historic time.

Let me give one first and most general example—what I might call the impulse for altitude, or the law of verticality. Nearly every architectural development shows the influence of this law. The pyramidal architecture of Egypt shows it in the growth from mastaba to pyramid and obelisk. The pyramidal architecture of the Maya shows it equally, as between, say, the Temple of the Cross at Palenque and El Castillo at Chichen Itza, or indeed the whole series of the steep-pitched terraces of Tikal. We may see it again in the Near East, moving from the terraced temples of Babylonia and Assyria down through time to the Moslem minarets and to the Buddhist stupas of Central Asia. In the Far East this impulse leads to a unique development, roof being added to roof, in the quest of altitude, until the pagoda, the many-roofed tower, emerges. And in European architecture it appears not only in major movements but also in details: the sub-storey which the Romans gave to the Greek temple when they made it theirs; the Italian *torre* rising above the *loggia*; the lintel giving place to the round arch and this in turn to the painted arch; the spire leading on to the *flèche*; the cubical shop or factory giving place to the skyscraper. Everywhere builders have sought for the expression of the sense of altitude, uprightness, and are we wholly wrong in supposing that this is in part due to the demand of balanced upstanding men that the world of their material achievement shall in itself in some part at least reflect and image the erect attitude of their own living bodies? Of course there is in this, what a Greek would have viewed as spiritual arrogance. Its parable is the tale of the Tower of Babel, and its answer



in history is the return to more modest and perhaps humane proportions, not only in respect to actual altitudes, but in the shapes which suggest altitude.

I am inclined to think that every architectural idea by which men seek to proclaim their dominance in the material world strives first for height, verticality. Nevertheless, in certain of these ideas this demand is self-defeated. Certainly this is true of the pyramidal architectures which a recent writer has included within the zone of what, for convenience, we may with him term the heliolithic cultures. Egypt is the exemplar, but Babylonia, Hindu and Dravidian India, Cambodia, Teotihuacan, Yucatan, are all examples. In each case the fundamental idea is the pyramid, and with the pyramid a dual despotism, the despotism of a king-and-slave society and the despotism of a god-and-victim natural world. For the pyramid symbolizes the brute rulership of gravitation. Every line is a supplication for rest and stability, and at all cost; every plane leans heavily upon the earth; and the whole structure is a dumb acknowledgement of earth's mastery of man. Its very materials are earthen, rubble, brick, with at best a veneer of geometrized stone; and the imagination cannot move into its interior, its structure, without the vision of numberless suppressed and buried units whose whole force is exhausted in upbearing the capstone—slaves under the might of the Pharaoh, bones wrought into the substance of the hills. Pyramidal architecture like the mass of a coral lives only at the surface; inwardly it is no more than dead casts of vanished polyps; and it is no marvel that such a form should be chosen by men as the most becoming for a tomb, or as the symbol of those states in which men are most dead because tyrannical power—whether of king or priest or warrior caste—is most absolute. Nor is it too far fantastical to assume that as expression of the Hindu sense of life, the pyramidal form becomes a capable image for the religion and philosophy of a people who believe that there is no humanity at the core of a universe within which man and mind are the eternal victim.

One might indeed say that surrender to gravity, or defiance of it, or its reproof in forms graceful or pleading, give the dominants of the great historical styles. Surrender is in the pyramid, which is little more than the heap which suggests ruin. Defiance and rebellion are in all forms which strive to pierce the heavens with more than man-stature towers and spires; and we may take Memphis and New York as the mightiest embodiments of each of these. Between them lies a scale, whereof the mean term is the classical Greek. Here harmony, balance, the subtle proportionality of pillar and architrave, colonnade and pediment, vertical and horizontal, give that serenity akin to resignation which is the spirit and genius of Greek art and of Greek wisdom, and is as simply humane and movingly saddened as the "Farewell" stela which grace the memory of beauty like an exquisite colophon; the "things of mortals" are intimated with every line, and



among them are tears. Greek architecture may readily decline into a perspective or even a façade æstheticism, and it did both, not only with the Romans but even with the Hellenistic kings; but in its divinest manifestations it assuredly expressed the subtlest empathy that it has been given to any architecture to express. Every column lives, even if in immobile poise, and every member of the architrave, even if in undisturbable repose; and Temperance and Fortitude and Wisdom are bound together in an eternal Justice which is carven in the stone of the Greek temples even as it was measured in the thought of the Greek philosophers. Consider for a moment the pitch of the Hellenic and the Gothic gables: the rise in elevation is only a few degrees, yet its angle subtends the whole rift that breaks Mediæval from Classic civilization and the whole arc that lies between Reason and Faith. For me there is none so lovely an outer embodiment of the Greek genius as are the Maidens of the Porch of Erechtheus: they are caryatides, but not slaves; they are noble and free-born and proud upbearers of their undiminishing burden, which is no less than the sense of their own unrelinquishable humanity. Architecturally, the Maidens are pillars, and every Greek column which has discovered its own truth shares in their burden and in their acquiescence.

The spiritual contrast with the Greek is not merely the Gothic, lifting up and upward as if about to open to the trump of doom. This has often been indicated, but the minaret no less than the spire typifies the aspiration of an imperial religion, and the Byzantine and the Mogul domes are alike emblems of lordliness. The arch, it seems, originated in the older East, but it was Rome which first used it to reflect the grandiose, and from grandiosity arch and dome have never departed far. It is true that there is fantasy—with an ecclesiastical turn to it—in the Byzantine dome, and there is romance, arabesque and exotic, in Saracenic and Mogul architecture; but domes Christian and Moslem and Buddhist, discoid, hemispheric or bulbous, if they be more than caps to turrets or crowns to towers inevitably convey something of the oppressive and the repressive. They are symbols of grandeur, and in spite of all intension, of an earthly grandeur, due perhaps to the very fact that they reflect so faithfully the heaven which circumscribes our gaze. For the dome is after all a roof, and it shares with all roof-heavy forms the monition of impending fate. Russian and Moslem fatalists alike have taken kindly to the domed sanctuary, and Burman Buddhists have employed it as an emblem of their own religion of relinquishment, while in the Occident it has never escaped a cold and impersonal aloofness akin to the ominous. The gods, says a Kiché myth, jealous of the wisdom of men, drew a veil over their countenance and obscured the heavens, so that men's gaze ended where their sight fell, and their wisdom with it; and this is in type what the architecture of the dome yields us, a symbol of empire but a sense of defeat.



In contrast with the ancient pyramidal architectures of the heliolithic zone, built of earthen materials, or rubble and brick, and reflecting the hopeless and superstitious despotisms that ruled the imaginations of their builders, the architectural styles characterized by column and architrave, arch and dome, sprang up in the northerly regions and northward of the domains of the pyramids, and this throughout the latitude of the whole Eurasian continent, from Spain to East India. The materials of this northward architecture are cut and dressed stone, geometrized out of the matrix; its motives are everywhere the discovery of space and light and the breath of life; and if, in its later dome-dominated forms it images the political imperialism of the state and the spiritual imperialism of the great proselytizing religions of Christ and Mohammed, it none the less bespeaks an empire of man and of that political law for which it is still our accustomed symbol. Even on the religious side it is no blind surrender to an enigmatic Nature, but the proclamation and citadel of a God who is man's War-Lord in our human struggle to make our world spiritually habitable.

Against this architecture must be placed the Gothic. Gothic is customarily treated as a special development of the architecture of column and arch—the column made complex, the arch broken—and its material is, of course, like the imperial building of the south, cut stone. But Gothic has also been thought to derive its inspiration from the living columns and arcades of the forest lands within whose horizon it was generated; and while this opinion is now out of vogue, it is, I think, in a broader meaning certainly true. For if the most ancient zone of man's building is the heliolithic, earthen and despotic; and that next in order both in time and space is the imperial, inwrought with the idea of law whether human or divine and imaged in forms hewn from earth's stone to the shapes that men demand; so, still to the north and again spanning the Eurasian Continent, from Britain to Japan, there is a third vast zone with its own characteristic architectural and cultural inspiration. Its fostering material was the timber of its forests, and we may indeed speak of it as forest-land architecture, and infer not wholly erroneously that its forms embody something of the vitalism, organic and elastic, which is in the living wood. Certainly it lies beyond fantasy that in its varied forms this timberland-conceived art of building embodies a life that is at poles with the death of the pyramids, and, in contrast with the repose of the Classic or the fatalism of the Moslem, is vivid with action and instinct with gesture.

There are two primary centers of this northerly architecture, each anciently forested. They are China and Central Europe. As contrasted with the south what is most distinctive of their styles is—besides the employment of timber as material—the emphasis that is placed upon the roof. In the southern, the earthen region, the roof is utterly dead, a mere weight sustained, flat and lost to perspective vision, as in Egypt and Babylon. In the imperial zone, the roof uprises, but modestly as in the Greek



gable, or returning upon itself as with the dome. In the north, however, the impressive feature is the roof; and this is true whether we view the high-pitched gables of the Teutonic world or the multiplex bell curves of the Sinitic Orient. Moreover, it is not only that the roof structures are impressive and ascending, but in each case, as the builder's art grows, the support is in form slender and resilient, thus further enhancing the frond of the edifice. Surely, if an analogy in nature for such an architecture is to be sought, it is most readily found in the slender trunks and massive foliage of the forest.

Gothic architecture, exterior and interior, surely shares in this emphasis of the roof; it is the gable which is the reason for the broken arch—not the arch the maker of the gable,—just as it is the gable which bespeak spire and flèche rather than dome-crowned minaret. Stone incorporates the thought, but it is stone cut no longer for law and for geometry, but fashioned and modelled into the images of life itself, as the florescence of Gothic decoration everywhere proclaims. Even the weakness of Gothic are the weaknesses of the stone's recalcitrance: which, like Platonic matter, is to such extent nerveless that the forms of life can never wholly infuse its dump substance. But in so far as form is embodied, man has never questioned that it is eloquent with action: of all the forms that the builder has dreamed, Gothic is most truly breathing and aspiring.

Of its age it is superbly monumental. Buttress and arch, nave, triforium, clerestory, element upon element it uprears the feudal hierarchy, as this hierarchy existed in church and state, in philosophy and law, in workers' guild and artists' guild, creating the civilization of the Middle of European History. In a spiritual sense it meant reverence and aspiration, uplooking and uplifting, and its virtues were the great chivalric virtues of Active Courage and Faith and Mercy. Indeed, if the south is despotic and the midzone imperial, I should call this northern the chivalric zone of the human spirit, and Gothic architecture the symbol of chivalry.

The Oriental development is, of course, not the same. There is a Chinese myth of Pan Kuo, the Earth Breaker, who hewed into shape the rocks of chaos to make a habitation for men and to unseat the throne of the Son of Heaven between sky and soil, and in the heavy Sinitic roof and the Dragon Guardians that warn evil from the Oriental portals, at least in fantasy I perceive the image of this breathing-room of humanity cleared between the upper and nether jaws of space, won by the demiurge, and preserved by the most tenacious of earth's peoples. And it is at least worthy of note that if we are to seek for the analogue of Europe's chivalry in any historic society, it is best found in Old Japan, where again Active Courage and Loyal Faith were the supreme virtues of the Samurai. Finally, while analogy is in order, I should like to point also to the American and Oceanic parallels; to the roof architecture and wood-carving decoration of



the warlike Maori in timbered New Zealand; and in America, far to the northwest of the pyramids of Mexico, to the timbered houses and carven totem poles of the heraldic Indians of the Archipelago. These represent primitive levels of achievement, but they are instructive of the art and the societies that look down out of the past of all the great timberlands.

#### IV

I have passed in review the great historical styles in so far as these incorporate in any distinctive sense what I have termed empathetic vision. I have endeavored in doing so to indicate not only their physical characters but also their monumental symbolism, each speaking the meaning of a civilization, an age, a people, or indeed of a great human idea. There are secondary periods which have added to architectural history their own gifts, but it is universally conceded that these gifts also are secondary, at least in the realm of architecture. If in architecture, I think that we must add, *then also* in the other arts and in the whole ordinance of life; for this must be the case if architecture be, as I have suggested that it is, our most speaking index of the whole of a culture or a civilization.

Illustration will fortify such conclusion. Of the secondary periods in the Western World the Hellenistic and the Renaissance are the most notable. Now the characteristics of Hellenistic and of Renaissance architecture are alike. Both drop from empathetic to perspective or façade vision, from imaginative vitality to ocular display, and both seek to compensate for their loss of life by the assumption of an excess of ornament, extrinsic, illusional, repetitive. It is as if each period were donning purples and broideries to cloak some sapped and chilled bodily substance. The descent from the Parthenon to the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus (each a masterpiece of its period) is *from* the column and toward the pyramid, from life and toward death; and the pompous perspectives of the Tuileries and Versailles are again corpselike when compared with the living edifices of the Île de la Cité. With Jesuit baroque and Italian rococo we descend to the third and lower level of vision—the façade is the thing and florid veneer masks spiritual emptiness. Later come our own “fronts” and “expositions”—mechanic advertizements of the pettiness of our merchandise and the tawdriness of our chattels.

But Hellenistic led on to imperial building, and it may be that the Renaissance will prove after all to be the dawn of a new age embodying a new and living human vision of life. For one thing—and this is notable—men have discovered a fresh and more malleable and submissible material than any which the architects of the past have known: we have turned into the Age of Metal and our builders are thinking in terms of spun lines and vibrant shafts as never before was it granted architect to think. The very mathematics that lies at the foundation of our engineering is become



flexible, for it is not the static geometry of the Greeks, but the calculus of forces and the chart of motion. The tools are ours, and if the world of man has in some sense grown restless for the discernment of the light of a new idea the means for its expression are under our hand. With the coming of the light will be born a new architecture—but only with the light, for while genius strikes leven-like at times even in uninspired periods (St. Étienne in Paris, is example), it strikes out of the dark and to no root. If architecture in the living sense is to speak our thought, it must be because the thought is living; and if it is to be great architecture, then it must be because of grandeur in that thought. "Sublimity is the ring of a great mind": what Longinus says of poetry is true of every art, and most true of those arts which most nearly approach the sublime.

Is there, then, any gleam in which we may descry something of the form and content of the idea that is to inspirit the coming civilization? Prophecy is futile, and advents are unforeseen in character even when anticipated in time. Nevertheless, there are some qualities which I think our age has already begun to define which cannot, I imagine, fail to become incorporated in any great expression to which it may yet give birth. One of these is already intimated in the very nature of the material which is ours: energy, action, is bespoken not only by the opulence of our production, but also by the weight of man's hand upon the face of nature, and energy was never so susceptible of material expression as in an Age of Steel. Again, metal itself is malleable in substance yet rigid in its power of holding shapes and strong in sustaining loads imposed upon it, and this should foretell a subtlety of response to the mind's impression such as no previous age has known,—this at least in the realm of decorative design. For a third trait I would mention our historic sense: no men who have preceded us possessed such a companionship with human time as is ours; we know the ranges of life as they have never hitherto been known; and granted the acquisition of wisdom we should become capable of assessing values physical and spiritual as heretofore they have never been assessed; the symbolism of the monuments of our future will then be both enriched by this knowledge of history and made significant by the discriminations of our philosophy. But at the last, I think, there must strike into the core of our life something more than even these, something central and building, a new dispensation and a new vision of the Pattern of Nobility. We will call it our understanding of God, and we will instil it into the structures of the temples which we shall erect; and when the day shall come when these temples also are to take their seated place in the pageant of man's handiwork, and in their turn recede into the human past, they will yet be testaments of spiritual treasure, and in the noblest sense monumental.









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